



**Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources**  
**Honorable Faiyaz Siddiq Koya**

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**KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE CASTAWAY ISLAND RESORT 50<sup>TH</sup> GOLDEN  
 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

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**CASTAWAY ISLAND RESORT**  
**Malolo**

**Friday 18 November, 2016**  
**1500 Hours**

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Na Momo Na Tui Lawa;

The Vanua O Lawa;

The Outrigger Hotels & Resorts representatives;

Management & Staff of Castaway Island Resort;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Bula vinaka and a very good afternoon to all of you.

It is indeed an honor for me to be here today to celebrate with you Castaway Island Resort's 50<sup>th</sup> Golden Anniversary.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This is a truly special occasion for the Resort and for the Fijian Tourism Industry. Today, Castaway marks half a century of delivering authentic Fijian holiday experiences to its guests, many of whom have come to regard Castaway as their home away from home.

From its humble beginnings in 1966, Castaway is now one of the jewels in the crown of the Outrigger Group with 64 bures, accommodating close to 300 guests at any one time, with a staggering 40 per cent of these guests as repeat visitors. For a global industry as competitive as ours, this is truly a remarkable achievement, testifying to the hard work of the Management and staff of the Resort over the years to continue to deliver impeccable customer service and genuine Fijian hospitality to Resort guests.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Without the initial and continued support of the Vanua o Lawa, Castaway Island Resort would not be where it is today. Despite leadership changing hands in both the Vanua and the Resort, the two parties have always kept a good relationship and have lived together in harmony over the last 50 years. This is a testimony of the great leadership of the Tui Lawa and the indissoluble understanding the Resort has with the Vanua o Lawa, most of whom are part of Castaway's family of hosts.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Over its 5 decades of operation, Castaway has survived storms and cyclones, emerging battered but with the spirit of its hosts unbroken. With the Fijian tourism industry caught in the wrath of TC Winston and its aftermath, Castaway was not spared. Instead, the Resort bounced back stronger than Winston with a \$5m facelift and opening of its doors to guests just a mere four months after the \$1.5m devastation left behind by Winston.

Castaway is an Award Winning resort bagging multiple national & international accolades over the years. Earlier this year, Castaway

scooped the Deluxe Accommodation Award at the 2015 AON FETA, recognizing and promoting excellence in tourism.

At the same event, Castaway also bagged 3 additional awards, recognizing the efforts and commitment of 2 outstanding staff - Mr. Lingo Reece & Mr. Lance Seeto and winning the Best Fine Dining Restaurant – a recognition of Castaway’s unique dining experience influenced and inspired by the local culture and organic Fijian produces from the island’s very own organic farm. A concept that my Ministry strongly supports and encourage operators in our industry to continue to push for.

There is a strong growth outlook projected for the Asia Pacific travel industry in the coming years and my Ministry will continue to work with industry partners such as yourselves to ensure we capitalize on every opportunity to develop our industry further.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Last week, our local chefs and baristas battled it out at the Moffat Salon Culinaire, held at the Sheraton Fiji Resort to see who cooked up what would best describe Fiji’s abundant resources for our divine and luscious cuisine. Such competitions are important, especially in our effort to build on effectively utilizing our local produce in the tourism industry.

In moving the industry further, my Ministry is working on releasing the findings of the 2014 International Visitor Survey, which will assist the industry in terms of understanding our visitor impressions and market trends.

Furthermore, we are also working towards having the Fiji Tourism Forum in March next year. However, in the course of the next few months, we will be conducting stakeholder consultation on key

projects the Ministry is currently undertaking such as the Hotel Data Collection System and Tourism Masterplan, which would undoubtedly require all our combined efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our industry today is the largest contributor to the Fijian economy. In 2015, the industry contributed 29.4 per cent of Fiji's GDP with a total direct foreign income standing at \$1.6billion. It has taken strong commitment from Government and the Industry over the years to bring Fiji's tourism industry this far. Castaway has been an integral part of this journey given its 50 years commitment to Fiji's tourism industry, a concept personified by the Resort's former owner and Fiji Tourism Visionary Award recipient - Mr. Geoffrey Shaw.

To past and present Management & staff of Castaway Island Resort – you've done exceptionally well for the last 50 years, thank you for your strong and undivided commitment to our guests, your work, and to the entire Industry. As part of the larger family of Fiji's tourism and hospitality operations - you are the heart and soul of our success as an industry. The Ministry looks forward to working with you all in the years ahead.

Ladies and Gentlemen

With those few words, I would like to wish you all an enjoyable afternoon and once again congratulate Castaway Island Resort on their 50th anniversary. Here's to the next 50 years (raise glass). Cheers.

Thank you and vinaka vakalevu.